

УДК 811.581+81'25+82.194

Вестник СПбГУ. Сер. 13. 2016. Вып. 2

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## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF EZRA POUND'S "CATHAY"

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This paper deals with one of the most relevant and ambiguous aspects of Ezra Pound's Chinese translations through an integrated, interdisciplinary approach. The research problem lies in evaluating the very reliability and adequacy of a so-called multilayered translation. The object of research is the literary heritage of Ezra Pound as a translator based on Imagist, Vorticist principles and Ernest Fenollosa's ideogrammic method. The aim of research is to disclose, comprehensively analyse, systematise and practically verify the translation transformations applied by Ezra Pound within the "Cathay" volume. The research hypothesis is that a multilayered translation may be considered a valid translation. Ezra Pound's "Cathay", regardless of its indubitable amateurish foundation and target reader orientation, has managed to initiate an intercultural dialogue which has immutably persisted in the post-"Cathay" era. Thus, Pound has contributed significantly more to comparative literature than galaxies of experienced, albeit reactionary, scholars of the 19–20<sup>th</sup> century have. Overall, this article should be of interest to readers, because results of research constitute a theoretical and practical basis for the multiple-lens approach towards a Chinese poetry translation. Refs 17.

*Keywords:* Pound, Cathay, Imagism, Fenollosa, Vorticism, Orientalism.

## ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПОЭТИЧЕСКОГО СБОРНИКА ЭЗРЫ ПАУНДА «КАТАЙ»

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Данная статья посвящена одному из наиболее актуальных и неоднозначных вопросов теории художественного перевода — специфике переводов средневековой китайской поэзии Эзрой Паундом. Объектом исследования является переводческое наследие американского поэта-модерниста в свете ключевых принципов имажизма, вортицизма и идеограмматического метода Эрнеста Феноллозы. Актуальность исследования обусловлена отсутствием общепринятых критериев оценки искусства поэтического перевода и дефицитом авторитетных научных изданий, которые бы освещали теоретические положения переводческой концепции Паунда в комплексе с практическим их воплощением в сборнике «Катай». Результаты исследования могут быть использованы при дальнейшей разработке теории формальной и динамической эквивалентности. Цель работы — комплексный анализ особенностей наиболее распространенных переводческих трансформаций, использованных Паундом; оценка степени состоятельности концепции «многослойного» перевода. В практической части данной работы автор выходит за рамки традиционного сопоставительного анализа, ставя целью как можно более полно раскрыть эмоционально-ассоциативный потенциал образов. В ходе исследования было наглядно продемонстрировано существование внутренней гармонии между дидактичностью китайской классической мысли и художественным чутьем Эзры Паунда. Библиогр. 17 назв.

*Ключевые слова:* Паунд, Катай, имажизм, Феноллоза, вортицизм, ориентализм.

## 1. Fenollosa's discovery as a replication of the Japanese "waku" reading method

Being considered one of the most influential architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry, Pound yet remains the least exposed figure for a mass audience. Paradoxical as it is, having given the first impulse for Anglo-American modernist poetry, he has never entered the list of classical to-be-read authors, invariably remaining the least-known literary reformer. Even less is he regarded as a translator of ancient Chinese poetic heritage. Some

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might even stress that he has obtained most recognition precisely owing to the aforesaid attempts. Notwithstanding numerous critical assaults, the subject entitled “Ezra Pound and China” has yet to be distinguished into its own field of study. Being judged variously, Pound’s translations have not been called trivial. Without doubt, he is strikingly contradictory — both ahead of his time and beyond time, in-between genius and flippancy, timelessness and translucency, domestication and exotification, dynamic and formal equivalence. Therefore, Pound’s literary phenomenon has to be looked upon over generations in order to pick up essential details, which is a guarantee for keeping him on the agenda long enough to be comprehensively investigated. Operating with terms “ours” and “theirs”,<sup>1</sup> Pound not only opposes West and Orient, but also searches for a joint foundation between two seemingly alien skyscrapers. Such a foundation can only be constructed from an ancient steadfast substance solid enough to hold both Western and Eastern cultural institutions. His gap-bridging theory arises from affinities, not from contradictions. Pound, armed with his comparative mode of different-yet-the-same, is striving to relate the past and the present, the foreign and the national, the collective and the impersonal. In addition, the American poet takes the liberty of mixing cultures and blending multicultural layers (similar to primary colours) into a white spectrum. More precisely, he is trying to use this whiteness to reveal universal values that are colourless and therefore constitute an ideal canvas for his modernist literary experiments. Obviously, Pound’s singular effort goes far beyond the literal, meaning-to-meaning-based translation, and is thus worth a thoughtful circumstantial investigation. According to Stephen Yao, “the extent of such interaction as well as the complexity of its dynamics, have gone largely under-theorized across the range of relevant academic fields” [1, p. 213]. Unlike numerous critical opinions, Pound rejects the widespread notion of Chinese culture being a victim of Western despotism and insensitivity. This condescending attitude (whether consciously or not) expresses nothing but a latent self-worship and firm belief in the colonialist superiority of the West. According to Pound, the East is scarcely in need of such sorrowful remarks. Besides, he stresses that the major challenge lies in analysing relations between person and nature, not merely East and West. Alexander Genis [2, p. 236] accurately conveyed the very goal of Pound as a translator: “He strives to reduce the distance between minds. He tries to raise art up to that universal ontological level where we are bound not by culture, but incorporated within nature itself”. Remarkably, Adam Kirsch declares that Chinese poetry in English was born in 1913 when Pound inherited voluminous notes on Chinese literature [3, p. 36]. This is where Ezra Pound first steps into the Orient. Having received a powerful creative urge, the American poet adjusts his previous artistic experience to similar views of the Japanese-tutored scholar. Essentially, Fenollosa advertises Chinese characters as exceptionally well-suitable for poetry. As a result, Pound acquires not only a backup for his earlier observations, but also an inspirational springboard for further funds’ accumulation. To Pound it seems that Chinese poetry strongly meets the Imagistic criteria so long advocated by him. His theory of supplementing luminous details<sup>2</sup> with Fenollosa’s “ideogrammic method” provides “Cathay” with a rich soil. Pound redirects a target audience to the very essence of a single image instead. In a challenging attempt to create an ideal model of an autonomous image, the American poet refers to it as a “direct treatment of the thing itself” [4, p. 3]. Talking about Pound’s other guidelines, a technique

<sup>1</sup> This is inevitable for any artist dealing with two cultural paradigms.

<sup>2</sup> An emphasis on specific details more than the meaning of the text.

of superpositioning cannot be omitted. It involves building one idea on top of another in order to let a reader look through lines and grasp a leitmotif of a whole verse, a so-called extended metaphor. Generally speaking, Fenollosa-Pound's joint efforts dissect the Chinese character, thus giving freedom to etymological fantasy.

Inspired and enthralled by innovative views on the pictorial nature of the Chinese character, Pound's genius concludes that the beauty of Chinese poetry doesn't depend so much on the skill of author or translator but on the poetic nature inherent in language itself. Here is where Fenollosa steps into action, bringing forward an assumption-based principle that most ideographic roots carry in them a verbal idea of action. Basically, it means that to the eye verb and noun are identifiable: "things in motion, motion in things, which leaks everywhere like electricity from an exposed wire" [5, p. 141]. Put another way, graphic gestures forecast the very essence of what is to be expressed. And since Chinese verse desperately lacks pronouns and tenses, words are simply being collaged together (a liberality from Western perspective). In short, Pound readily salutes the late-Victorian Japanese-tutored scholar as an author of a first scientific method applicable to versification tactics and strategy. Later on, after the publication of Fenollosa's striking discovery of the role of ideographic nature within Chinese poetry becomes grossly exaggerated and turns into Pound's obsession. Basically, Pound via Fenollosa gets carried away advertising the Orient. Yunte Huang assumes that Fenollosa's "overemphasis on the visuality" of Chinese characters may have been due to the mediating influence of the Japanese method of reading Chinese texts called "wakun" [6, p. 37]. Thus what Pound happily takes for Fenollosa's revolutionary invention, can as well be attributed to a peculiar style of translingual (mis) interpretation practiced by marginal Japanese scholars. Although Fenollosa's materials cement Pound's theory of translation, yet he excises certain ethnocentric passages, which signifies his self-sufficiency in the translation field. Besides, Pound eventually admits his overall ignorance towards phonetics' potential. This once again proves that "Cathay" isn't just a fleeting encounter with Chinese culture. Pound's lasting correspondence with China, numbering more than 200 letters of dynamic interaction from 1914 up till 1959, can speak up louder than critics' subjectivity. Obviously, "Cathay" is drastically more than just a medium for improving and developing modernist literary style and practicing new imagistic techniques. In 1954, being more qualified in Chinese characters, he revises the most questionable and vague of his Chinese translations. While prior to the publication of "Cathay" translations of Chinese poetry numbered no more than a dozen, by 1930 they were widely available at the instance of every Western reader. The conclusion is as follows: "Cathay" was a clarion call for sinologists and amateurs to add on to newly established intercultural dialogue.

## **2. Pound's "ABC of translating" as a medium between modernist principles and luminous impersonality**

First of all, the fact that Pound possessed neither a philological background nor was he a translator cannot be disregarded. He even refers to his own translations as "small 3 ½ poems" [7, p. 109]. In fact, no single translator is capable of reproducing all the subtle shades of the original. And yet this fact hasn't kept Pound from shaping his own attitude towards the art of translation. Further on, dares to initiate an art of poetry translation itself. As a matter of fact, Pound manages to replace long-held ideals such as accuracy and

faithfulness. For him the accessory-of-art position of translation depreciates role of the latter for literature in whole. So, the American modernist starts off by putting in original artwork and its translation on the same scale which has formerly been considered simply inappropriate due to a subordinate deteriorative position of translation art. According to Pound, "literature lives on translation, it is fed by translation; every allegedly great age is an age of translations" [8, p. 34]. He defines translation as a poetic act in its own right. He assigns a contributing role of a modernist epoch to an after-life of every original artwork. Every translated text should be judged on its own terms. Besides, he manages to convey an idea of what "better reading" poetry actually is: innovative, experimental, dynamic free-verse translations of ancient Chinese classics. Of course, in the light of a universally established translation theory it sounded like violent neglecting of an original. Nevertheless, Pound — medium between original artwork and final recipient — feels obliged to perform a so-called primary treatment before end-product can be delivered to mass. Thus, the method of critical perception withdraws the Orient from a passive metaphysical kingdom which has been peacefully flourishing prior to the appearance of "Cathay".

Pound shapes his motto as "to make it new is to make it old" in which classical values become catalysts for modern creative writing. John Sullivan states: "As living poetry the classics can only exist in translation" [9, p. 22]. Modernist as he was, Pound somewhat anticipated postmodernist vision of concepts such as literature and authorship. Accordingly, all translation is both continuity and re-reading of past texts and authors. Based on this universalism principle, nothing even slightly innovative can be said regarding past artistic experience. Henceforth, an author acquires the new status of a transparent eyeball or a masked stranger, giving way to an inquisitive reader's mind. No wonder Pound takes advantage of a Chinese verse that involves erasing of subjective feeling conventional in Western perception. Pound even defines his own translations as a series of elaborate masks. Next, let's state that Pound proposes an alternative method of observational reading as a logical supplement to his translation theory.<sup>3</sup> He somewhat takes the liberty of a scientific approach towards poetry, claiming that a proper method for studying poetry is the method of contemporary biologists which involves a careful first-hand examination of the matter and a continual comparison of one specimen with another. The American poet's indulgence in scientific terms somewhat arises from an "insecurity in his literary position and status" [10, p. 8]. Put another way, he has initially been perceived as an entry-level poet in rapidly-modernising and popularising London. On the other hand, Pound via the scientific-based approach convincingly speaks up for applying to translation a little common sense currently applied towards scientific research. The reason is to make sure that every slothful idle reader is left on the opposite bank of comprehension. Tang poetry was also intended for an extremely sophisticated audience. Here, once again, ancient Chinese poetry matches modernist's standards of an exceptional elite status of poetic art and its target audience among a popularised and hopelessly capitalised consumer society. Uncommon as it is, simple mathematical operations such as addition, subtraction and rearrangement, seem fairly justified the more so because natural laws vividly match his literary notions. Logically enough, Pound's translated verse is plain, full of intense clarity, precision, economy, sharpness of language and vivid imagery; foregoing traditional rhyme and basics of prosody. By and large, his Imagistic principles correlate with the widespread

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<sup>3</sup> A kind of reading that involves reader's reflective mind.

Chinese wisdom that if a man can't say what he has to say in twelve lines, he had better keep quiet. Pound's ABC of translating can as well be called a hygienic theory of poetry and translation — elimination of excessive and unnecessary syntax minimising the loss of the artistry of the text.

According to Rachel Turner, Pound creates “variations on theme”: associative, imagistic, phonetic [11, p. 2]. But in these creative variations there is no place for archaic sentimentality which is so common to both earlier and contemporary translations from Chinese. However, de-romanticizing and simplifying poetic language isn't Pound's first-hand invention. The beginning of a new era compels all notable poets to engage in the “direct speech” movement and seeking for intercultural landmarks to fulfil their modernist ambitions and to critique the *status quo* of Western culture. Being a Columbus in terms of creative Chinese translations, he should yet be put on the same scale with all modernists striving for an Eastern breeze. Put another way, affinities between Pound's aesthetics and the Chinese language are most likely derivative from the modernist era itself. Zhaoming Qian even recognises modernism as a phenomenon of internationalism and multiculturalism [12, p. 2]. Basically, what he means is that Pound looks to the East for commonalities as “crystallising examples of the Modernist' realising Self”. The American poet himself claims to have been long ready to accept the New Greece challenge, because the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century created all necessary prerequisites for Chinese language and literature to become fundamental components of a newly established Imagism. Actually, the majority of scholars give the credit to Chinese syntax itself which leaves room for creativity, guesswork and poetry. Put another way, Chinese text admits a wide range of possibilities for a translator. At the same time solid unity with tradition and mythological roots seem flexible enough to fill intercultural gaps of the disoriented and totally confused era.

### 3. Reflection of Confucian universalistic doctrines in “Cathay”.<sup>4</sup> Controversy over Pound's translations

Pound was penetrating rapidly into Confucianism. The reason is, being trapped within Western mentality boundaries, he saw the Tang dynasty as an up-to-date end product of modernism era or, more precisely, what modernism was supposed to be in the Western interpretation. What was so attractive in Confucianism that he couldn't find in West? How could they ever happen to have something in common? First of all, we may recall that Pound's literary theories underwent a certain evolution from aesthetic delight-directed poetry to that of a major socio-political weight thus gradually resulting in unification of morality and literature. The best evidence in favour of a continuous collaboration between his artistic flair and didactic antiquity lies in assiduous fulfilment of the Confucian principle of “right naming” (rectification of names), concept of universalism and historical cyclicity throughout the “Cathay” volume. Along with travelling into his China-the-dreamland, Pound's Imagistic aesthetics gives place to a “Vortex, from, through and into which ideas are constantly rushing” [14, p. 469]. This literary movement is set to redefine an idea of an image itself in order to elude second-rate poems which recorded visual, motionless and overly descriptive images. Remarkably, one of the basic Vorticist princi-

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<sup>4</sup> [13, p. 8]: The author states that “the significance of Confucian preaching through literature allows Pound to liken Confucius to a modern vorticist”.

ples — art handles life by all means avoiding mystification and pompousness. Thus and so, American poet's creative evolution matches Confucius' attitude towards literature as an ideally didactic medium. Importantly, Vorticism doesn't evade comparison with the past, and yet this kind of comparison must be made by someone "whose idea of tradition isn't limited by a conventional taste of four-five centuries and one continent." Thus, Vorticist principles of evaluating the present through tradition and endless comparison of both contemporaneity and tradition ideally met a chief didactic mission of Chinese literature in general. However, as a result of Pound's over-enthusiastic preaching, morality and perpetual order of the Confucian universe were turned upside down. The above-stated theories were mislabeled as "totalitarian" and "fascist". Put another way, Confucius as a powerful antidote against evils in the West didn't prove its efficiency therewith. Notwithstanding failed alterations, Pound is inscribed in literary history as a prime-mover against loose users of words. Having been influenced by Confucianism, he draws poetry closer to social science. It is clearly observable in the very didactic idea of "Cathay" fully stuffed with universal values meant to elucidate cyclicity and infiniteness of history.

Admittedly, "Cathay" is pursued by an infinite monologue (leaving no room for dialogue) of literary reviews where different colours of the spectrum are mixed together without a chance to become smooth. But in either case, Pound's heritage is a multicoloured spectrum, so it must be viewed upon in its wholeness; otherwise it will be an act in defiance of universal laws. Neglecting endless shades of implicated meanings conveyed within "Cathay" is surely naive. Pound's poetic licenses should be viewed within three-dimensional space in order to put his translation theory and its practical verification into a broader postcolonial context. A resolution to this collision might as well consist in expanding obsolete narrow bounds where a formulaic definition of translation happens to be misplaced. Willis Barnstone, in his turn, locates Pound's translations among the most important and original collections of poems in English of our century.<sup>5</sup> Definitely, such an appreciation of "Cathay" is based on originality and language-refining contribution as a main criterion for translation's relevance. In order to justify his sentiment Barnstone states that Pound emerges at an advantage due to the obvious awkwardness of translations by previous scholars put on the same scale. By and large, while some scholars reproach "Cathay", others salute Pound at his best as an ordained Confucian poet and give him a credit for breathing life into ancient Chinese poetic landscape in general and Tang poetry particularly.

#### 4. "The Beautiful Toilet" as a midmost point of Pound's creative inquiry into Emersonian naturalistic terms

In order to illuminate specificity of Pound's artistic alterations, one must address the most prominent translations within "Cathay" [16]. Word-for-character rendering and Fenollosa's works set off Pound's creative attainments. According to Barnstone's chart, register, structure and authorship are the three major categories for translation analysis based on the conventional concept of fidelity. To start with, Pound aims his creative impulse at inquiring into feminine mentality. "The Beautiful Toilet" is a reproduction of "qingqing

<sup>5</sup> Barnstone is an initiator of a functionalist approach towards analyzing poetry based on three fidelity criteria [15].

hebian cao” 青青河边草 — second of “Nineteen Old Poems” composed circa 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. This word-for-word interpretation has been composed by Hugh Grigg 葛修遠 [17].

青青河畔草， green • green | river • bank • grass  
 郁郁园中柳。 lush • lush | court + middle • willow  
 盈盈楼上女， full • full | floor + upper  
 • woman

皎皎当窗牖。 bright • bright | just • window + lattice  
 娥娥红粉妆， beautiful • beautiful | red • powder + make-up  
 纤纤出素手。 delicate • delicate | put (forth) • white • hand  
 昔为倡家女， former | be • sing + house • girl  
 今为荡子妇。 now | be • wander +  
 (noun suffix) [wandering vagrant] • wife

荡子行不归， [wandering vagrant] | travel • not • return  
 空床难独守。 empty • bed | hard • alone • keep

blue / green • blue / green | river • bank/ side • grass  
 fill/ full • fill/ full [in the first bloom of youth] | storied/ house • on • girl  
 luxuriantly/ spread the • luxuriantly/ spread the | garden • in • willow  
 white/ brilliant/ luminous • white/ brilliant/ luminous | just/ face • window • door  
 beauty/ of face • beauty/ of face | red • powder • toilet  
 slender • slender | put forth • white • hand  
*Ernest Fenollosa*

“The Beautiful Toilet”  
 Blue, blue is the grass about the river  
 And the willows have overfilled the close garden.  
 And within, the mistress,  
 In the midmost of her youth,  
 White, white of face, hesitates, passing the door.  
 Slender, she puts forth a slender hand;  
 And she was a courtesan in the old days,  
 And she has married a sot,  
 Who now goes drunkenly out  
 And leaves her too much alone.  
*Ezra Pound*

Fenollosa's word-for-word interpretation offers alternatives for the American poet. Obviously, the fact that Pound selects the less hackneyed words should be attributed to his artistic flair. Let's now take a glance at several connotative meanings offered by “青”. To begin with, “blue”, apart from colour, also expresses moodiness. Secondly, in the spectrum blue outdoes green in terms of disposition since deception and solitude better negotiate with darker colour. Further on, the American poet by omitting the noun “pan” 畔 expands both spatial and apprehensive bounds. Thus (whether consciously or not) he achieves a kaleidoscopic effect of imagery superposition. The second line undergoes comprehensive structural transformation, but register remains almost intact. In other words, certain metaphorisation takes place. That is, “yuan” 園 turns into “the close garden”, *id est* garden becomes “close” after denotative meaning is replenished with an emotional implication of an estranged wife. The latter metaphor inclines towards a stereotype-based Western mind. Next, the coordinating conjunction “and” interferes with the natural and straightforward flow of imagery. Yet, to Western, deductive mentality it stimulates successive movement of events. Above all, Pound as a literary pioneer resists what seems to him an imposition of conventional redundancy. Therefore repetitive patterns undergo ellipsis and considerable reduction. Remarkably, repetitiveness exerts significant influence upon conveying continuity and integrity of mythological thread thus enabling a retrospective view into cultural paradigm of antiquity. The purpose of reduplication so widespread in ancient Chinese versification is made no mystery of: it serves as a double underline to the essence of things. It also manages to hold fast reader's focus and facilitates scene shifts and in-between scene transitions, whereas from the Western perspective reduplication has a reverse “playground effect”. In other terms, reduplication resembles a well-known counting-out rhyme game.

The third line is of no less interest, since the translator's choices have actually nothing in common with a blindfold roulette. More precisely put, “ying ying” 盈盈 corresponds with Fenollosa's parenthetical remark “in the first bloom of youth”. But still, Pound's “midmost of youth” better correlates with the emotional content of the original, because it embraces a wide range of implications. That is, an abandoned wife having approached the midmost of youth finds herself at the crossroads of life-curves, crucial point of life-turning decision. Pound's version opposes rendering the character “full” in its direct meaning — pubescence and physical maturation. The third line undergoes division in order to headline the luminous image of mistress having reached an impasse — cornerstone of the whole poem. Next, Pound sets off “within” against the original “loushang” 樓上. The reason is as follows: “loushang” meaning “upper floor” implicates “height” therefore “surpassing challenges”. Has she already stepped over challenges? Quite the contrary, “within” awakes in mind “A-B” correlations, limits, margins and therefore restrictions imposed upon the mistress. All the above stated artistic devices give subsidiary evidence of Pound's artistic skilfulness. In short, via substituting direct meanings with figurative ones, he juggles contrasts<sup>6</sup> and thus reaches particular expressiveness. Nevertheless, a reader might confuse a metaphorisation device (bitter-ironical touch) with flowery eloquence or an inflated style. The question is as follows: did Pound by calling “nü” 女 “the mistress” actually digress from Confucian conception of “right naming”? In fact, “mistress” of house/ garden/ courtyard is herewith juxtaposed with “mistress of destiny”.

<sup>6</sup> The word “園” possesses an evidently wider meaning than “樓上”.



Next, Fenollosa's word-for-word translation enables initiative throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> line. And Pound momentarily seizes this chance. By rejecting meanings like "brilliant/ luminous" he takes advantage of "jiaojiao" 皎皎 meaning "white". At this point tracing an etymology of colours in ancient Chinese mythology might be at hand: "white" accounts for mourning, withering and sadness. Therefore, it symbolises the unavailing efforts and vain hopes of the young mistress. Besides, the fact that a white-faced girl has for ages signified pureness and high ideals intensifies emotional associations. Pound concentrates on altering the register by adding a verb "hesitate" and participle construction. Abrupt syntax is in its turn meant to maintain indecisive mood of marginal situation. At the same time Pound acts in accordance to the original mood of despair bypassing comforting promises. Neglecting the word "chuang" 窗 might be explained from the standpoint of Western clichéd memory. That is to say, the moment we hear the keyword "window" our imagination leaves ancient China and travels far away to those dragon-guarded spired castles where princesses peer out the windows. Next, confusingly enough, in the midmost of stanza we run across the title "The Beautiful Toilet" which has initially been waiting its turn to be recited after the 4<sup>th</sup> line. Other things being equal, the translator dares to half-open the mistress' vanity case. As a result, temporal affairs and impermanency find themselves. So, the most logically relevant notion here would have been to tip the scales and disturb the labile balance in her universe. In spite of being capable to deprive the mistress of those perishable joys, Pound indulgently refrains from it. When the narration comes to the point of discussing connotations of "sushou" 素手, Fenollosa with his colour suggestions ("white") proves to be of no use for Pound. Actually, the reason for such a lexically inaccurate choice is that most likely rooted in a couple of significant details. Firstly, Pound having taken advantage of white colour in the 5<sup>th</sup> line hesitates to evoke a "white-of-face-white-of-hands-ghost" in the following line. Secondly, having evaded devices of repetition, Pound adheres to a principle "the whole and its part": "Slender, she puts forth a slender hand". By and large, events in their sequence take place in consistency with natural laws. Therefore, reader can feel that some kind of a logical order rules over randomness and irregularity. Finally, responsible for her own destiny as she is, mistress' "素手" seems too slender to be capable of stepping out of the close garden. There's one more connotation that shades new light upon the given word combination. That is, "empty hand" has nothing to offer except for her vanity case. On the whole, polar vectors are never meant to coincide: "皎皎當" depicts surface gloss, abundance and replenishment, while "素手" symbolises illusory nature of "the beautiful toilet". Repetition ("And she") applied in 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> lines is designated for acknowledging the multiple overlap of things allegedly incongruous. In other words, there exists a collision between the "courtesan's old days" and recent salacious undertakings. Besides, the bitter results of her marriage are being made visible both in direct and figurative meaning, especially taking into account an intentional use of the present perfect. What we mean is, usage of this tense leaves only one way out of the situation: downstream toward infinity. In the concluding lines author of the original doesn't specify whereabouts of "dangzi" 蕩子 and purposes of his wandering. Pound is, however, driven to extremities ("sot", "goes drunkenly out") because of a flickering presence of modernism era's stereotypes. An assumption that the Eastern mind is considerably more precise apropos of imagery once again proves itself valid. Finally, the translator's personae lowers tone, softens spectrum and moderates expressions. Put another way, Pound's intuition electrified to the utmost possible degree suggests spreading delicate pastel shades: "leaves her too much alone". By

taking advantage of a meaningful silence (three dots), the American poet sustains the effect of incompleteness and indeterminacy of future prospects. He seems to have thrown upon a reader his own Poundian conception of the unbearable lightness of being.

### 5. “The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance”: Eternity of implications within one stanza

Much prominence is given by sinologists to “The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance” — Pound’s translation of “yu jie yuan” 玉階怨. This poem is composed by Li Bai in a “court lament” genre (gongyuan 宮怨).

玉階生白露，	jade • stair   bear/ cause to happen/ grow/ exist • white • dew
夜久侵羅襪。	night • long   encroach/ enter/ invade/ occupy/ advance gradually
	• silk •
	stocking

却下水精帘，	withdraw • (lower) down   water • crystal • (blind) curtain
玲瓏望秋月。	
(glittering glittering)	
(sound)+ jade ornament [bright]  gaze•	
autumn+moon [autumn moon]	

The Jewel Stairs’ Grievance  
 The jeweled steps are already quite white with dew,  
 It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze stockings,  
 And I let down the crystal curtain  
 And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

Firstly, the definite article “the” is intended to portray steps as something well-known, customary and easily recognised, therefore thoroughly familiar to a narrator and closely related to the entire subject. Thus, Pound lays emphasis on a crucial determinant role of steps throughout the female character’s strivings. The purpose of complaint, grievance itself is concealed within these steps. Steps, for instance, might be awakening reminiscences of whether it is salacious affairs or personae which should be forgotten. Pound also deliberately substitutes “yu” 玉 (“jade”) in order to sustain commonplace for material values, compound feelings from the standpoint of universalism. The verbal adjective “jewelled” signifies everything that is merely superficial and imposed. Put another way, it symbolises imprisoning cardinal virtues such as genuineness and authenticity. Next, irrespective of cultural disparities, ascending a staircase involves a character of steadfast and decisive spirit whose drastic step follows both inevitably and painstakingly. But the female personae ascending jade stairs of a challenging life experience fails to keep up with the time boundaries. The adverb “already” implacably mantles far-reaching prospects and expectations, while a summit of her principal staircase remains infinitely distant. Besides, a spectrum of greyish tones assumes responsibility for lady’s declining years. And still, col-

ouristics in no way confines itself to grey: “white” here possesses a verbal meaning which seems to be rather significant. That is, the feelings may have undergone bleaching, whitening. So, a motionless and benumbed mind is henceforth striving to end the deadlock. Being deeply engaged in a tête-à-tête conversation with the poem, a reader’s noblesse obliges him to discern particular obstructions, that is the enjambment of consonants impeding eurhythmy and creating favourable conditions for the wordplay discussed below. As a matter of fact, subtraction is called forth to witness simplification of the adverb “already”: “all (---) ready”. As a result, we get something like: “all seems to be ready and alert already, but not quite”. This wordplay is used in order to acknowledge hesitation and instability of moves. A reader even gets a feeling that deceitful “white dew” impacts her deliberate decision of this illusory “all-readiness”. The whole verse compassionately echoes her rhetorical exclamation “Why?”, punning against the word “white”. Basically, Pound is juggling natural laws for the sole purpose of puzzling the reader with contrasts and carrying on intrigue. Night, similarly to her melancholic sentiment, is in its “blossoming”. The abundance of literary devices is complemented with initial rhyming. More precisely put, the alliteration of ‘w’ consonants reinforces feelings of grief and mourning, speaks up on behalf of weeping and wailing. The preposition “with” in its turn leads us to the question “What she is left *with*?” In other terms, it symbolises a character’s borderline condition between the image of youth flashing behind the eyes and “dew” which may represent *withering* tears and uncertainty. Further on, Pound invests luminous intensity in the verb “soaks” which, in its turn, enjoys a wide range of alternative explanations. Here the alliteration of “s” consonants creates a hissing snake-like effect symbolising fatality. Figuratively speaking, a mysterious “she” is infused and dewed with contradictions that stand out against a marsh-like background. Let’s remind that the verb “soak” possesses a “fenland area” dialect connotation. One might as well tolerate a regressive step towards the first line: “dew of youth is soaked in a blend of years and disappointment”. Noteworthy, Pound’s choice to reveal a feminine personae and thus specify the stockings’ owner signifies a bent for individuality. Denotative meanings such as “accumulation/savings” implied in the noun “stocking” might hypothetically signify a formerly rebellious but now decaying “alter ego”. Next, let’s mention a substitution of “luo” 罗 (“silk” — fragility) with “gauze” which, in its turn, stands for a transparent cloth — wire and haze. Provided that garments are comprehensively inquired into, there arises a woman dressed out of the latest fashion. And yet she has a fine mist before her eyes; she is locked behind the wire of prejudices. With each of Pound’s strokes images take shape of a translucent mosaic pattern where a polysyndeton of “and” conjunctions seems to be a reinforcing agent. Therefore, slide shifts between scenes follow smoothly and unrestrictedly. By and large, the “and” preposition appears to be an inspiration, initial charge, anticipating tool for her resignation. Let us note that, apart from its widespread denotative meaning, “lian” (帘 “curtain”) introduced in an adjectival form is significant for the whole poem. In the midmost of a blinding night clear autumn’s charm is regarded as a consolation prize. Eventually, she lets the scales fall from her eyes (i. e. lets down the “iron curtain”) and sorrowful thoughts are together set at liberty. The final stylistic devices to which Pound resorts to is the substitution of “qiu yue” 秋月 with “clear autumn” and the omission of the onomatopoeia for jewelry glittering — “ling” 玲. By doing this, he turns the grammatical structure inside out and plays with a static frozen moonlight image. He aims at reviving this image. Consequently, Pound by avoiding use of

extended metaphors not only puts his authentic signature upon Chinese poetry, but also traces a boundary between late-Victorian scholars' translations and the post-"Cathay" era.

### Conclusion

This article presents an investigation into the particular issue of Ezra Pound's Chinese translations. This issue gains currency due to persistent discrepancies in evaluating Pound's creative alterations. Importantly, critical assaults for the most part are neither theoretically substantiated nor supplemented with supporting empirical evidence. This paper concludes that the main cause of such an acute intercultural controversy lies in the fact that the position of poetry in the field of conventional translation theory is rather indeterminate. One more contributing factor is as follows: Western mentality proceeds from a firm conviction of ethnic supremacy, thereby Chinese culture is unconsciously misconceived to be a victim of Western despotism and unawareness. "Cathay" actually rejects such a condescending attitude and equates both cultural paradigms declaring their resulting intercommunication. Among numerous aforesaid creative undertakings, Pound should be fairly given credit for his pioneering endeavour to allot classic Chinese values to act as a catalyst for a literary renaissance.

In order for the research issue to be more efficiently illuminated, Pound's innovative modernist vision of a translation as a kind of criticism towards an original artwork is introduced. Much attention is paid to modernism as a phenomenon of multiculturalism and its drastic influence upon Pound as a mediator between individualism and impersonality. It is also worth mentioning that Pound's modernism not only replaces long-held ideals such as accuracy and faithfulness, but also traces a line between late-Victorian scholars and "Cathay" by de-romanticising and simplifying literary art. In addition to having revised the art of poetry translation itself, Pound lifts an ordinary translator above the generally accepted accessory-of-poet position. Thus, he attaches an epoch-making significance to translation as a charge for literary tradition. In order to increase efficiency of this research, major Imagistic notions including the Theory of luminous details, logopoeia, phonopoeia, melopoeia, juxtaposition and superposition are clarified. These conceptions, being a priori strongly correlated with major guidelines of Chinese versification, constitute a major prerequisite for "Cathay". Fenollosa's "ideogrammic method" alongside with his literal renditions of ancient Chinese poetry is defined as an amateurish albeit inspirational springboard for Pound. The theoretical basis for this article relies upon viewing the "Pound-China" connexion within the three-dimensional space of various critical observations. Much of these polemics derive from neglecting a translucent divergence between translation typologies — structural, scholarly and poetic. Moreover, facts objecting to a common notion of Chinese poetry being Pound's fleeting superficial involvement are provided. Pound also undergoes creative evolution from Imagism to Vorticism which necessitates redefining the idea of image itself and erasing subjective feelings. As a result, he manages to draw poetry closer to science via eluding loose use of words, motionless and overly descriptive images. Such a scientific approach seems fairly justified, since simple natural laws vividly match the rules of Chinese prosody. Consequently, the distinguishing characteristics of the "Cathay" translations are as follows: plainness, clarity, precision, economy, sharpness of language and vivid imagery. In order to elucidate and systematise Pound's general translation strategies, an integrated comparative analysis of two poems is

performed. Ambiguity and multivalence of meanings implicated in the source-language poem is shown. Pound's translation techniques are investigated from the standpoint of Willis Barnstone's chart which offers the three major categories for translation analysis based on the conventional concept of fidelity — register, structure and authorship. In short, challenges presented by classical Chinese poetry at a lexical and syntactical level lie in polysemy, allusions, word-plays and metonymies which require explanation to the target reader. To sum up, Pound's experimental dynamic reader-oriented free-verse translations manage to sustain a kaleidoscopic effect of the superimposition of imagery. Therefore, the hypothesis of this research concerning validity of multilayered translation has been corroborated.

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**Для цитирования:** Zaichenko S. A. Distinctive features of Ezra Pound's "Cathay" // Вестн. С.-Петербург. ун-та. Сер. 13. Востоковедение. Африканистика. 2016. Вып. 2. С. 82–94. DOI: 10.21638/11701/spbu13.2016.209

**For citation:** Zaichenko S. A. Distinctive features of Ezra Pound's "Cathay". *Vestnik of Saint-Petersburg University. Series 13. Asian Studies. African Studies*, 2016, issue 2, pp. 82–94. DOI: 10.21638/11701/spbu13.2016.209

Статья поступила в редакцию 11 января 2016 г.

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